



File Code: 1950

Date: 15 June 2016

Dear Interested Citizens,

The Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, Gold Beach Ranger District is seeking scoping comments on the Shasta Agness Landscape Restoration Project (Shasta Agness project). The proposed actions would occur within the Shasta Agness planning area and intends to address loss of habitat biodiversity within this landscape. This loss is due to habitat conversion to a more shade-tolerant vegetation regime brought on as a result of 75 years of fire exclusion. Past clear-cutting practices have reduced the development of late seral habitat. Past road construction and deferred maintenance has led to degraded ecological integrity and resilience throughout the project area. Back-logged projects and lack of funds for infrastructure and maintenance has diminished available recreational opportunities throughout the project area.

The Shasta Agness project has emphasized early and substantive collaboration in its development. Robust engagement and contributions to project location, design, and proposed treatments have come from the members of the Wild Rivers Coast Forest Collaborative (WRCFC). WRCFC is comprised of local and regional members, including: Federal and State agencies, community non-profit support organizations, counties, members within the forest industry, members within the business and academic community, environmental and conservation groups, tribes, interested citizens, among others. All WRCFC meetings are open to the public. The Forest Service participated on a WRCFC led field trip on May 14, 2015. A workshop was held on June 10 and 11, 2015 in Gold Beach. The WRCFC developed and submitted recommendations to us on May 11, 2016. The recommendations focused on three priorities: unique ecosystem restoration; aquatic restoration; and quality access and facilities for roads, trails, and campgrounds.

The Gold Beach Ranger District's interdisciplinary team ("we") has adapted the WRCFC proposal to meet directions and objectives put forth by the Siskiyou National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) (USDA 1989), as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan (USDA and USDI 1994). Some elements of the WRCFC proposal are covered by existing NEPA decisions and will not be evaluated further. Additional activities are proposed under the unique ecosystem restoration objective, which includes restoration actions for sugar pine and Jeffrey pine and associated serpentine vegetation communities. A detailed description of the Shasta Agness project location, purpose and need, and proposed action is described below. The project website can be accessed here:

http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/nepa_project_exp.php?project=49607. The notice of proposed action and supporting documentation is also available for review at the Gold Beach Ranger District, 29279 Ellensburg Avenue, Gold Beach, Oregon, 97444. For more information or to ask questions about the project, please contact Matt Timchak, team lead, at 541-247-3624; email mstimchak@fs.fed.us.

Project Location

The Shasta Agness project area is located approximately 30 miles northeast of Gold Beach, Oregon, on the Gold Beach Ranger District and Wild Rivers Ranger District of the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, Curry County, Oregon. The project area includes National Forest System (NFS) lands surrounding the community of Agness. The landscape encompasses all of the Shasta Costa - Rogue River, the Stair Creek - Rogue River, and the lower portion of the Lawson - Illinois River watersheds.

Purpose and Need

The overall purpose of the proposed actions in the Shasta Agness project area is to restore resilience and ecological integrity to unique ecosystems, aquatic and riparian habitat, and provide a diverse range of

high-quality, sustainable recreation opportunities. We would like to implement holistic ecological restoration opportunities on a landscape scale. Management activities include: unique habitat restoration by restoring oak savannahs and woodlands, sugar pine and Jeffrey pine forest stands; accelerating development of late seral forest structures; improving water quality, rehabilitating soils that have been impacted by past management activities and natural events, enhancing habitat conditions in aquatic and riparian areas for endangered and threatened fish species, and reducing hydrologic impacts of excess or poorly designed roads; and managing recreational opportunities and needs in a sustainable manner. Such actions are directed by the LRMP standards and guidelines for habitat diversity, the Forest Service Manual 2020 for ecological restoration and resilience, and the Northwest Forest Plan.

The interdisciplinary team observations agree with the preponderance of scientific evidence that indicates that current ecosystem conditions exhibit lower composition of certain species and habitat types and have departed from natural conditions in certain plant communities in the project area. These departed conditions are the result of past fire and vegetation management regimes conducted within the project area. It is necessary to improve ecological integrity and resilience of vegetation and habitat conditions in a landscape that is highly departed from the range of historic variability. If we do not address these departed conditions, we run the risk of losing rare and highly specialized habitat and would not be in alignment with the LRMP.

Historically managed plantations are lacking in structural and species diversity and are growing in dense and homogenous conditions. We want to promote conditions where vigorous growth, and lower densities will result in large trees, structural complexity throughout the canopy layers and increase species diversity. Promoting late successional characteristics would meet the objectives of the Northwest Forest Plan and designated late successional reserve (LSR) attributes.

The lower Rogue River watershed is an important aquatic and riparian corridor for the Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast Coho salmon. Degraded water quality and habitat conditions in this project area are primarily caused by lack of instream large woody debris, lack of shading over streams, presence of invasive plant species, introduction of road sediment into water bodies, lack of quality refugia and nutrients for aquatic species, presence of fish passage and sediment barriers. Taking action to address these conditions would lead to improved habitat and water quality. Managing aquatic resources and riparian reserves would meet the objectives of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy.

There are concerns about the lack of high-quality recreation opportunities, and impacts from unmanaged off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, within the project area. Roads and trails have been minimally maintained, which has resulted in a loss of public access to recreation opportunities. In their current conditions, trails within the project area do not meet the demand for mountain biking, equestrian, hiking, motorized use, and interpretive trails. Campgrounds within the area are also in need of improvements that address concerns about public safety, vandalism, and resource impacts including improper disposal of waste, impacts to vegetation, and soil erosion. The desired condition is to provide a range of sustainable recreation opportunities consistent with Management Area goals as identified in the Northwest Forest Plan, Siskiyou NF LRMP, Rogue River Management Plan, and Illinois River Management Plan. This project would help the Forest Service identify trail management objectives (TMOs) and actions needed within the project area to provide a trail system that meets current and projected user demand, provides for diverse (including motorized and non-motorized) use, and meets minimum requirements for health and safety. This project would also address recreation site improvements needed to meet the current and projected need while protecting resource values, discouraging vandalism, and minimizing annual maintenance and operating costs.

There are multiple conditions with existing states defining the issues that need to be addressed. These conditions are as follows:

Unique Habitat Conditions

Forest vegetation in the Shasta Agness project area has changed over time due to a combination of fire exclusion, human activity and past management practices. We are concerned with the changes occurring to oak and pine associated ecosystems. These particular oak and Jeffrey pine associated ecosystems are rare at a global scale and provide habitat for several Forest Service Sensitive listed and/or endemic Siskiyou Mountain vascular plant species. Due to 75 years of effective fire suppression, loss of anthropogenic fire use by American Indians, and colonization by non-native plants, the current distributional extent and integrity of these ecosystems has been reduced within this landscape. Current populations of certain plant species are either entirely extirpated or have severely declined due to the added shade and successional competition. Landscape scale simplification has led to reduced biodiversity within these following unique forest stands:

Oak Savannahs and Woodlands

Currently within the project area, conifer tree species and non-native vegetation have encroached upon many oak savannahs and oak woodlands. Several Oregon white oak savannahs are presently being encroached by Douglas-fir, due to fire suppression. Black oak woodlands are becoming Douglas-fir dominated stands, as stand density levels are too high for the moderately shade intolerant California black oak. In their pine/oak condition, these sites provide excellent habitat for a variety of small and large animals. Oak Savannahs and savannah/forest edge areas provide hiding and thermal cover, nest and den trees, and food for many wildlife species, including deer, elk, wild turkeys, and a variety of songbirds (Southwest Oregon LSR Assessment, page 39).

Sugar Pine

Sugar pine is a species that often establishes after moderate to high severity wildfire. Seeds rest in the soil waiting for a disturbance that allows them to germinate and pioneer low productive sites with porous soils such as on ridges and southerly facing aspects. Extensive high severity fires that burned in the early 20th century created sufficient opportunity for sugar pine to colonize areas within this planning area; for the past 60+ years, natural occurring fires have been suppressed. Those areas are now dominated by dense mid-seral, even-aged Douglas fir and the few remaining live sugar pine would likely succumb to competition related mortality in the near future. Little to no regeneration of young seedlings or saplings of sugar pine can be found in any of the areas where this species was once common. To compound issues with fire exclusion and dense stand conditions, this tree species is susceptible to insects and mortality from the non-native pathogen, white pine blister rust. Higher composition of sugar pine is desired across the landscape for species diversity, to provide important food source for many wildlife species, and it is a culturally significant tree to many of the local American Indian tribes.

Jeffrey Pine

Jeffrey pine is an early successional species, eventually replaced by shade-tolerant conifers in the absence of fire or other disturbance. Jeffrey pine forests are often open enough to let in considerable sunlight hence rare serpentine plants associate with this kind of habitat (SW Oregon LSR Assessment, 1995). Trees become fire-resistant with age, and regular, low-intensity fire facilitates the persistence of Jeffrey pine; for the past 60+ years, fire conditions have been suppressed, leading to denser stand conditions in historically open serpentine areas with Jeffrey pine.

Late Seral Habitat Conditions

In the project area, approximately 7700 acres of presumably old growth forests were removed through clearcutting from 1961 to 1997. After harvest, these stands were typically planted with Douglas-fir and managed for future timber production. As a result, these stands typically lack structural and species diversity and are growing in dense and homogenous conditions. These plantations are located in areas that have since been designated (in the 1990s) as LSR under the Northwest Forest Plan. Management to

promote late seral conditions have not been implemented throughout many of these stands. As such, young plantation stands are developing in dense conditions that will delay or not achieve late successional characteristics that are suitable for species dependent on late seral habitat. These stands would benefit from variable density treatment that promote late seral habitat.

Port-Orford-cedar (POC) is an ecologically, culturally, and economically important tree species in its endemic range in southwest Oregon and northern California. POC is an important structural component of late seral forests and within riparian areas for long lasting in-stream structures and stream shading (Hansen et al, 2000). The uses of the tree for American Indians were many, including construction of living areas. POC is highly susceptible to an exotic root disease pathogen (*Phytophthora lateralis*) that results in mortality. This exotic disease has greatly reduced the number of large POC (especially in riparian areas) in the project area. Known POC stands exist on 4700 acres with at least 840 infected acres within the project area.

Aquatic and Riparian Conditions

Natural and anthropogenic activity has affected the lower Rogue River watershed such as road construction, past timber harvest, and introduction of invasive plants. The dominant hydrologic characteristics and processes are high rainfall and transient snow zone, which create high winter flows. Low summer flows are average for the geographic area. Water quality and temperature is an important indicator of stream health which help identify areas for potential restoration.

The watersheds can be characterized as dynamic landscapes that lie within steep inner gorges. The present fish habitat within these watersheds varies. The current conditions of the watersheds that need to be addressed include: aquatic organisms passage barriers, invasive plant species along riparian corridors, 303(d) listed streams, and lack of stream complexity including large woods, pools, and off channel habitat. Road construction, timber harvest, and fuels treatment are the principal management activities with the potential to increase sediment to the streams. These activities have added to the naturally high levels of sediment delivery since timber management began. These activities increased the role of surface erosion in the sediment delivery process over what previously occurred naturally. These activities may also have increased debris flow and mass delivery rates.

Soil restoration efforts would be addressed by estimating detrimental soil disturbance from historic timber harvest based on assumptions from the Forest Service Activity Tracking System identifying past logging systems, year of harvest, site preparation methods, and aerial imagery. Current conditions of these area include soil displacement, deficiency of water infiltration due to compaction, and loss of soil productivity.

Recreation Conditions

Nationally, outdoor recreation is the single greatest use of NFS lands and plays a valuable role in connecting communities to their public lands and engaging them in collaborative stewardship. Community involvement in visitor outreach and education, trail maintenance, wilderness and wild and scenic river stewardship, and maintenance and operations of developed sites is critical to ensuring the long-term sustainability of recreation opportunities on public lands managed by the Forest Service. Recreation-related tourism is an important economic driver in southwest Oregon and approximately 98 outfitters and guides offer fishing, rafting, jet boat, and scenic tours on the Rogue and Illinois Rivers combined. There is a need to improve recreation opportunities in the Shasta Agness project area to provide a sustainable and diverse range of recreation opportunities that is commensurate with current and future demand and further recreation and tourism development goals in support of our local communities.

Recreation use within the Shasta Agness project area is concentrated along waterways, including the Rogue and Illinois National Wild and Scenic Rivers and several tributaries, and their access points. The Rogue River is known internationally for its salmon and steelhead fisheries as well as its commercial jet boat tours, whitewater rafting, and incredible scenery. Foster Bar Recreation Site is the primary takeout for the Wild Section of the Rogue River and provides river access, multi-day parking, and eight

campsites. The Illinois River is notable for its challenging whitewater and rugged, undeveloped setting. Of the 50 miles of the Illinois River included in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System, only 21 miles are accessible by road. Oak Flat Campground lies within the Recreation Section of the Illinois River and provides river access for fishing and floating and 15 rustic campsites. Vandalism, unmanaged off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, garbage, and lack of Forest Service presence at the Oak Flat Campground has resulted in concerns about inadequate visitor services and facilities, resource impacts, and visitor safety.

The Shasta Agness project area also offers numerous trails, including portions of the Clay Hill (1160A), Devil's Backbone (1162), Game Lake (1169), Lawson Creek (1173), Pine Grove (1170), and Illinois River (1161) and Rogue River (1160) Trails. Trails are minimally maintained and lack current Trail Management Objectives (TMOs). This project would allow us to work with local stakeholders to develop TMOs that define what types of use each trail would be managed for and intended level of development and are informed by visitation trends and current and projected visitor demand. TMO development would also ensure that trails are not being managed for a type or level of use that is incompatible with the management direction, trail design, trail location, or resource protection.

Driving for pleasure is another popular recreation activity within the Shasta Agness project area. Visitors can take the Rogue Coquille National Scenic Byway (Forest Service Road 33) up the Rogue River from Highway 101 to visit the town of Agness, OR or continue on to Powers, OR. Bear Camp Road (FSR 23) is a popular shuttle route for the wild section of the Rogue River and is heavily used during the summer months (May through October). There is interest in developing additional visitor facilities and interpretive sites at locations along these popular driving routes.

Proposed Action

The Gold Beach Ranger District proposes to implement multiple actions across the Shasta Agness landscape. These actions would: 1) restore unique ecosystems through vegetation treatment and management; 2) promote late seral habitat development; 3) restore and protect aquatic and riparian habitat conditions; and 4) provide user opportunity. The proposed restoration forestry work would take place in an adaptive management environment, incorporating the potential to alter restoration prescriptions based on the outcomes of initial treatments. The following proposed activities are collectively intended to improve landscape-level conditions within the proposed project area.

Unique Ecosystem Restoration and Late Seral Development

There are common pre-commercial and commercial actions that would be taken with all habitat types. Commercial treatments may be accomplished using the following logging systems: ground-based systems, skyline cable systems, and aerial (helicopter) systems. Pre-commercial treatments may be accomplished using hand crews to cut smaller conifers and shrubs, piling of cut material, snag creation, and prescribed fire. Piles would be constructed by hand or mechanical equipment; the resulting piles would be burned or some material may be made available for firewood. The common actions are:

- Stand density reduction implementing commercial and pre-commercial treatments to cut and remove trees (primarily Douglas-fir)
- Variable density thinning, with thinning, skips, and gaps, removing primarily Douglas-fir
- Prescribed fire treatments following stand density reduction treatments
- Manual (pre-commercial) treatments including: density reduction of smaller trees, maintenance of open/savannah areas, piling of forest fuels, and treatment of areas inaccessible or uneconomical for logging methods
- Planting of oaks, disease resistant sugar pine, western white pine, and Port-Orford-cedar where appropriate
- Use of existing transportation system would include haul and operations on currently open Forest Service roads. It may also involve opening currently closed roads (Maintenance Level 1) for treatment implementation. Roads would be closed upon completion of treatment.

- Revegetation of native plant communities including pollinator friendly seed mixes and container plantings.
- Temporary Roads–
 - Reuse existing road templates (non-system roads) to facilitate treatments
 - This would occur mostly in plantations that were previously logged
 - New temporary road construction is proposed in limited circumstances. Short temporary spurs to access treatment areas where the restoration benefit outweighs impacts to other resources. Restoration benefit to road length/impacts ratio would be evaluated for each proposed new temporary road.
 - No new temporary road construction or landings in riparian areas.
 - All temporary roads would be rehabilitated by restoring proper drainage and hydrologic function, reducing soil compaction, and revegetation utilizing native plant species where appropriate.

Fuel reduction activities would occur within treatment areas especially in areas identified as fuel management zones (FMZ) and wildland urban interface (WUI) areas. FMZs are within 100-200 feet of strategic roads. WUI is the area where human development mix with undeveloped wildland; the WUI for the project area encompasses lands surrounding the community of Agness. Fuel treatments may include additional cutting of surface fuels and small trees; tree pruning; reduction of fuels created from mechanical treatments and hand piling; and ladder fuel reduction.

Prescribed fire reintroduces fire into a landscape in a controlled and systematic manner. This project proposes to allow prescribed fire as a follow-up option following all treatments described. Suitable prescribed areas would be designated based on conditions at the time of burning; prescribed burns are dependent on specific fuel moisture and weather conditions. Certain conditions must be present in order to manage fire intensity and ensure smoke impacts are minimized. Prescribed fire holding lines may include roads, trails, hand or machine lines, natural fire breaks and snow. Hand held drip torches would typically be used for ignition. It is important to note that limited resources and the technical hurdles associated with the application of fire have historically resulted in fewer acres being burned than are typically planned. We would prioritize acres for implementation based on residual fuel loading, strategic placement, and technical feasibility.

Taking preventative actions against diseased POC ensures that existing stands of POC remain healthy. POC is an important structural component of late seral forests and within riparian areas for long lasting in-stream structures and stream shading (Hansen et al, 2000). This proposed action is intended to slow the spread of POC disease. The following actions are proposed:

- Cut all live POC less than 12 inches in diameter within areas identified as high risk sites along specified open roads. High risk sites are the following areas:
 - 25 feet below open roads, 50 feet above open roads or to top of cut bank, 100 feet below road around stream crossings

In oak restoration areas, appropriate oak and sugar pine species would be planted. Areas near existing oaks would be priority for planting due to need for associated mycorrhizal fungi. Barren areas would be planted with nursery stock or from seed. Disease resistant POC would be planted in appropriate areas throughout the project area. Some planted seedlings would be protected with cages to prevent animal browsing. Native shrubs would be planted in oak restoration areas. Native grasses and forbs would be planted or seeded in disturbed areas. Riparian areas would be re-vegetated with native trees and shrubs. Disease resistant sugar pine would be planted in gaps in sugar pine restoration units.

Treatment Specific to Unique Habitat Restoration

This unique ecosystem management is considered restoration forestry work and would take place in an adaptive management environment. Initial treatments would potentially alter and guide subsequent restoration prescriptions.

Oak Savannas and Woodlands

- Radial release around white/black oaks
- Cutting Douglas-fir up to 26-30 inches in diameter, and up to 120 years old. Since encroachment by Douglas-fir has been happening for the last 80-120 years, larger tree sizes and older trees are proposed to be cut to achieve objectives around oaks. Snag creation of larger trees may occur if the trees are shading oaks.
- May remove spotted owl dispersal habitat (pending Recovery Action-10 analysis shows adequate dispersal habitat in watersheds)
- Planting of oak seedlings, native grasses and forb species following treatments. Utilize species favorable to pollinating insects.

Sugar Pine

- Create openings up to ¼ to 2 acres in size (depending on topography) to promote pine regeneration
- Radial release around pines with larger live crowns
- Thin dense, mid-seral stands that developed following stand replacement fires. Sugar pine is currently a minor species, with low composition in some of these stands.
- Maintain spotted owl dispersal habitat, by retaining over 40% canopy cover
- Cutting trees up to 20-26 inches in diameter in thinning portion, and up to 30 inches if within 50 feet of larger pines or in areas designated for gaps. Cut trees up to 100 years old. Density reduction (thinning) within even-aged stands can be achieved by cutting trees in the 20-26 inch range. In order to release around sugar pines and create gaps for pine regeneration, larger trees up to 30 inches are proposed to be cut.

Jeffrey Pine

- Create openings up to ¼ to 2 acres in size (depending on topography) to promote pine regeneration
- Radial release around pines with larger live crowns
- May remove spotted owl dispersal habitat (pending RA-10 analysis shows adequate dispersal habitat in watersheds)
- Cutting trees up to 20-26 inches in diameter and up to 100 years old. These sites with Jeffrey pine don't commonly have many trees larger than 26 inches, and cutting trees up to this size can achieve objectives to create open stand conditions.

Treatment Specific for Promoting LSR conditions

Characteristics LSR characteristics often include large trees, multiple canopy layers, structural complexity, snags and down wood, and diverse plant communities. In order to develop late successional conditions, variable density thinning in previously harvested areas (plantation stands) can help promote and accelerate development of these desired conditions. Without intervention and in the absence of fire disturbance, expected stand trajectory are slated for longer growth timeframes, resulting in delayed development of complex structural stands.

- Create openings from ¼ to ¾ acres in size to promote structural and species diversity
- No plantations are older than 65 years old.
- Maintain spotted owl dispersal habitat, by retaining over 40% canopy cover

Aquatic and Riparian Restoration

Restoring and protecting aquatic and riparian habitat would improve water quality and riparian condition functions and processes in the lower Rogue River watershed. The objective of the proposed actions are to benefit watershed conditions such as: water quality, soil productivity, and habitat for riparian and aquatic

species. The following actions are proposed for the Shasta Agness project area: up to 37 miles of invasive plant species removal and potential instream large wood placement, up to 21 miles of potential road decommissioning and storage (ML2 to ML1). Fish and sediment passage barriers would be analyzed at the time of field reconnaissance to determine if further action is required. Areas identified to have had soil detrimental impacts by human activity should be subsoiled and combined with organics to a minimum depth determined by the soil scientist based on a field site examination. Also, the combination of subsoiling and reseeding of native plant species may be helpful in some areas where the organic slash mat is not sufficient organics material to regenerate vegetation growth.

Existing system road decommissioning and storage

Management of the NFS roads are considered a priority where road-generated sediment impacts streams, where there is a potential for catastrophic failure of a drainage structure, or hydrology has been detrimentally affected by a road. Of the roads proposed for decommissioning all are closed maintenance level 1 (ML 1) roads. Roads selected for storage are roads in maintenance level 2 (ML 2) converted to a ML 1. Conversion to a ML1 would require basic custodial maintenance to keep damage to adjacent resources to an acceptable level and to perpetuate the road to facilitate future management activities. Table 1. lists potential roads for decommissioning and storage after further field reconnaissance is done by specialists.

Table 1. Potential roads to be analyzed during field reconnaissance to be decommissioned or placed into storage.

Road ID Number	Current Operational Level	ML Recommendation	Miles
2300730	1- Basic Custodial Care (Closed)	Decommission	1.4
2300736	1- Basic Custodial Care (Closed)	Decommission	0.5
2300770	1- Basic Custodial Care (Closed)	Decommission	1.0
2300820	1- Basic Custodial Care (Closed)	Decommission	0.7
2300860 & spurs	1- Basic Custodial Care (Closed)	Decommission	2.0
2300911	1- Basic Custodial Care (Closed)	Decommission	0.9
2300990	1- Basic Custodial Care (Closed)	Decommission	0.7
2308260	1- Basic Custodial Care (Closed)	Decommission	0.1
3577350	1- Basic Custodial Care (Closed)	Decommission	1.6
Potential Miles of Treatment			9
2300475	2 – High Clearance Vehicles	1- Basic Custodial Care (Closed)	0.7
2300995	2 – High Clearance Vehicles	1- Basic Custodial Care (Closed)	0.2
2308260	2 – High Clearance Vehicles	1- Basic Custodial Care (Closed)	1.3
2308330	2 – High Clearance Vehicles	1- Basic Custodial Care (Closed)	0.7
3336070 & spurs	2 – High Clearance Vehicles	1- Basic Custodial Care (Closed)	4.6
3730010 (portion)	2 – High Clearance Vehicles	1- Basic Custodial Care (Closed)	1.5
5325520 & spurs	2 – High Clearance Vehicles	1- Basic Custodial Care (Closed)	2.6
Potential Miles of Treatment			12
Total Potential Miles of Treatment			21

Several treatments may be used as a single method or in combination to minimize impacts to resources. On some roads, only portions may be closed or decommissioned. The following provides strategies for road decommissioning and storage treatments to minimize aquatic, riparian and environmental concerns:

- Break up compacted surfaces – for decommissioning only
- Pull culverts and re-contour stream channels, install proper drainage
- Install road dips to better disperse runoff from road surfaces
- Place 2-3 inch diameter rock armor at the outlet of the dip to dissipate erosive potential where erosion hazard is high

- Frequently relieve roadway ditches so that the total length of ditch that flows to stream channel is substantially reduced
- Ensure that if a culvert is plugged, minimize the distance the water flows along the road
- Outslope road segments
- When appropriate, construct low water crossings

Existing maintenance level 2 roads to remain open

Field analysis would be performed on several roads within the project area that may impact aquatic and riparian resources as well others. The treatments are similar treatments as listed in the roads decommissioning and road storage section. Additionally, culvert replacement is a proposed strategy for existing maintenance level 2 roads remaining open.

Recreation

Working with our partners at the WFCFC, the Forest Service has identified several recreation enhancement opportunities within the Shasta Agness project area.

Campgrounds / River Access Points

- Improve visitor services, and reduce impacts from recreational use, at Oak Flat Campground on the Illinois River. Prepare site development plans that address volunteer host site needs, future fee collection system, blackberry removal, river access, fire safety, and installation of barriers as needed to reduce impacts from unmanaged off-highway vehicle (OHV) use and improve visitor safety.
- Improve river access at Foster Bar and reduce ongoing maintenance and operation costs.
- Decommission Illahe Campground (which is currently closed) or convert to a group use site available for a fee through an online reservation system.
- Decommission developments at Billings Creek Dispersed Site.
- Improve recreation opportunities at Shasta Costa Creek and reduce resource impacts associated with off-highway vehicle use.

Trails

- Establish TMOs for the Devil's Backbone Trail (1162), Clay Hill Trail (1160A), Game Lake Trail (1169), Lawson Creek Trail (1173), Pine Grove Trail (1170), and Illinois River National Recreation Trail (1161).
- Improve diverse use trail opportunities on the established trail system by identifying deferred maintenance needs (including the replacement/repair of bridges) on trails within the project area.
- Construct an interpretive trail in the Big Bend area that complies with trail accessibility guidelines.
- Decommission Nancy Creek Trail to reduce impacts from OHV use as recommended in the Record of Decision for the Travel Management Plan – Subpart B Motorized Vehicle Use on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest.
- Provide motorized trail opportunities. Perform deferred maintenance on portions of the Lawson Creek, Game Lake, and Illinois River Trails previously opened for motorized use.
- Improve signage and install vault toilets at the Illinois River National Recreation Trail trailhead near Oak Flat and the Rogue River National Recreation Trail trailhead near Big Bend.
- Work with interested stakeholders to identify opportunity for conversion of closed roads to motorized and/or non-motorized trails.

Education/Interpretation/Stewardship

- Improve interpretation of the project area's natural and cultural history.
- Improve trailhead parking and signage.

- Work with partners and individual user groups to encourage responsible recreation use. Properly sign motorized trails and diverse use trails and work with partners to encourage compliance.

Summary of Proposal

The proposed actions discussed above are summarized in the table below. The actions are categorized by habitat type. The proposed unique ecosystem restoration action would be implemented on up to 7100 acres of strategically-placed actions. Table 2. Provides a treatment summary for actions considered under this proposal.

Unique Habitat Restoration	Treatment type	Range of acres for analysis
Oak	Commercial	1200-2000
	Pre-commercial	300-1200
Sugar Pine	Commercial	500-1200
	Pre-commercial	500-1000
Jeffrey Pine	Commercial	250-500
	Pre-commercial	500-1200
Total		3250-7100 acres
Other vegetation treatment	Treatment type	Range of acres for analysis
Plantations	Commercial	1000-1400
	Pre-commercial	200-600
POC Sanitation	55 miles of roads	200-500
Total		1400-2500 acres
Treatments throughout all units		Range of acres
Oak planting		300-2000
Pine planting		500-1000
POC planting		500-1500
Prescribed fire		1000-3500
Fuel management treatment		500-1000 acres
Aquatic and Riparian Restoration	Miles	Acres
Road storage	12	
Road decommissioning	9	
Tree Density reduction		Up to 500 acres
Stream Restoration	37	
Recreation	Miles	Acres
Trails	50	

Comments Welcome

Participation of interested persons, state and local governments, and Indian tribes is encouraged during the scoping period and throughout the planning process. Your comments at this early stage provide valuable information regarding project design. We are currently seeking information, comments, and assistance from state and local governments, tribes, and other individuals or organizations who may be interested in, or affected by, the proposed management activities. To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns on the proposed action, comments should be as specific as possible. In order for your comments to be most useful, we would appreciate receiving them by the close of the comment period (July 15, 2016) as designated by the legal ad post date. The legal ad is posted

on the website; the scoping period will remain open for 30 days (including holidays and weekends) after the first date of legal ad publication. In an effort to reduce paper use, the Forest Service emphasizes electronic correspondence throughout this project. Please submit your comments via email to: comments-pacificnorthwest-siskiyou-goldbeach@fs.fed.us. Comments submitted electronically must be in plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), portable document format (.pdf), word (.doc or .docx), or an email message. Please put **“Shasta Agness Project”** in the subject line.

Hard copy comments may be: Mailed to the attention of Tina Lanier, District Ranger, c/o Matt Timchak, Team Lead, 29279 Ellensburg Avenue, Gold Beach, Oregon, 97444; Hand delivered weekdays (except holidays) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to the Gold Beach Ranger District, 29279 Ellensburg Avenue, Gold Beach, Oregon, 97444; Faxed to 541-247-3641.

The proposed project is subject to the pre-decisional review (or objection) regulations of 36 CFR §218 Subparts A and B. Only those who submit timely and specific written comments (defined by 36 CFR 218.1) during a designated public comment period established by the responsible official will have eligibility to file an objection (36 CFR §218.5). It is expected that the legal notice will be published in the Curry County Reporter and the Grants Pass Daily Courier, starting on June 15, 2016. The public comment period will run for 30 days at initiation of the posting of the legal ad; the legal ad is the official posting date for initiation of the scoping comment period. For objection eligibility, each individual or representative from each entity submitting timely and specific written comments must either sign the comment or verify identity upon request. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to object must meet the information requirements in §218.25(a)(3).

I appreciate your interest in public land management.

Sincerely,



TINA LANIER

District Ranger